

HIGH LIGHTS



SIERRA MADRE ARTS GUILD

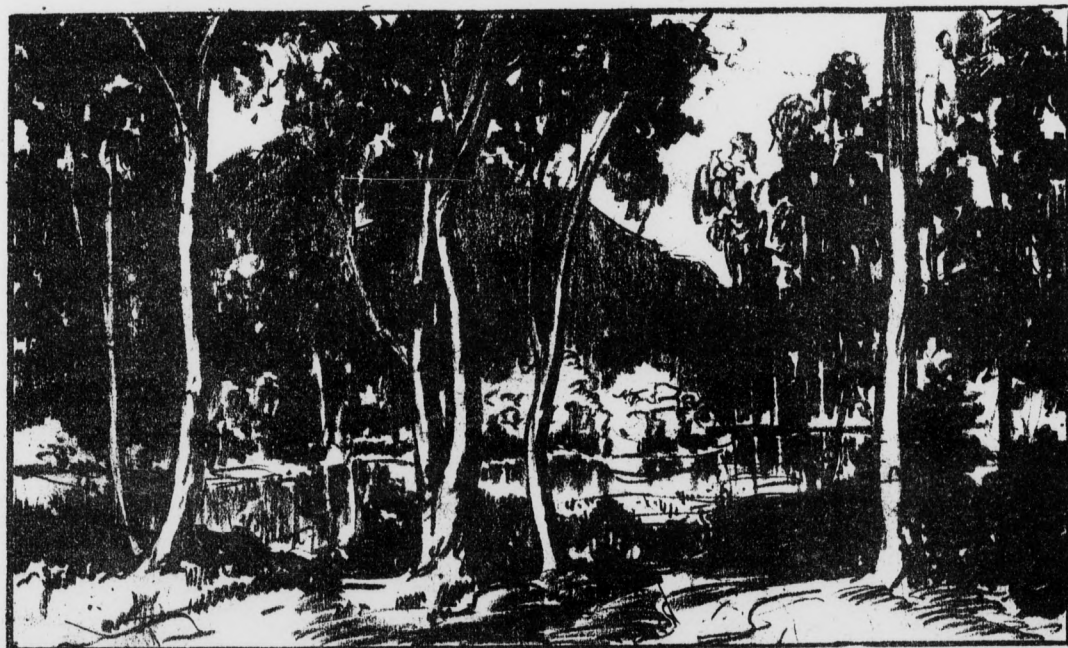


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SIERRA MADRE SAVINGS BANK

HIGH LIGHTS

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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HIGH LIGHTS, from the foothills; issued monthly by Sierra Madre Arts Guild at the Old Brick Oven, 28 Windsor Lane, in Sierra Madre, California.

NIJINSKY...AFTERWARDS

Janet Cheney

He stands
 so achingly alone.
 among the friends who love him
 that were the earth to leave its orbit
 and with cataclysmic thunders
 hurl itself
 in disintegrating pieces,
 shattered and lost,
 into the cosmos;
 and should he find himself
 on some rent piece
 that slackened
 its mighty leap through space --
 the miracle beauty of that whirling movement --
 and shuddered still
 out there in chaos,
 he, Nijinsky,
 would not know it;
 nor could he be
 more stilled in outer darkness,
 more riven from all he knew
 and torn from all he gave,
 more stark alone
 than he.

ELIZABETHAN LOVER

When the kingcup gilds the water mead
 And the primrose lights the wakening copse,
 I'll venture forth to greet my Love
 Although her shining presence stops
 The very life-stream of my heart --
 This lady I must see --
 Or, meeting once, I must depart
 If I disfavored be.
 I'll bind a crown of golden cups
 And jewel the delicate primrose in
 And my Love shall find her chaplet hung
 On a hawthorne bush where the spiders spin.
 And doth she then take up her wreath
 And place it on her hair,
 I'll bravely come to whisper, so,
 What I so greatly dare!

WHAT THEN?

It is not time that matters, nor age, but spirit. Careless alike of new and old, the spirit is life, while time is mere dimension within whose measure age is but a memory, an extension out of the past. While the spirit is strong, then, and before it fades, be neither early nor late, but timeless, in this day and hour, and cling tightly to your own coat and cease troubling about another's, for his will never cover you nor lend a patch to your back. It is the spirit that is animate and thoughtful; it is the spirit that is present and wise, that wanders far over the waters and returns like the dove to the ark. How should the spirit be hoary, though all else is hoary; how, like a wide spreading oak, should it gather the years and the moss? Not if winged and unfettered, but if rooted and bound. Cut your moorings, then, probe your heart with question and be free; yet, where no pioneer can blaze the path nor fact emerge from speculation, nothing of life is to be lost in futile search, seeing that this valley, while faulty, is green in truth and that in a little, wherever we are, we are but a dark portion of the quiet earth. Or should we waste our forty years wandering in the wilderness to leave our bones before the gateway to some promised land that we are never to look upon? But better underfoot is the hard rock of actuality than all the soft promises that ever were made.

Where the paths of the forest are found a maze and the signs have all been tampered with, the lost traveler is heard crying for a guide. There will be those who will come to him and will show him maps and charts of their own devising, so complete in detail that even the most skeptical will be convinced. They will say to him as with authority, "Follow me," but themselves are seen bringing up the rear and are never in the lead; they will even show forth a good semblance of wings, but their taproots go down far into the granite and the gneiss. These are the puppets of the hidden kings, speaking not for the right but the selfrighteous, not for headway but for retrogression, not for growth but decay. They hold the scepter, the throne and the crown and are clothed in deep purple, but the power is far from their hands. If he follows where they go, it will surely not be long before he is brought to some morass.

Be not deceived, then, by these hawkers of the absolute and the infallible. There is but one map maker whose claims are not to be disputed and he has written "unknown" across everything but the merest fringe. Wide and utterly boundless, beyond and yet beyond, reach these undisclosed

regions and these undiscovered scenes, while the barriers of our perplexities are great as mountains and our understanding is but a dim trail into the mist.

We move a little, we climb a little, and a strange chasm opens to be bridged; we cross the abyss, we gain the newer fields, and already, due to novel approach, the older way is useless and the whole road up which we have come must be rebuilt. How many an able expedition, due to the unforeseen, has reached instead a point of greater import than that far removed objective for which it started. How many a long established route that was thought built for the ages, has been abandoned with the ages because the lay of the land has changed and has brought the foundations to ruin. The wreckage of their once glittering trains now line the ravines by the roadbed where they have plunged through the trestles and have jumped the tracks! And because they were accounted giants in their day, history still numbers the names of those illustrious travelers who have there gone down, though much we cease now to trouble with what they did or what they said, and it is myth and legend that carry on. "Thus spake the sages;" yet, thus in the dawn they spake, not once, but never.

Where the far exploring spirit leads, there is the guide; nevertheless, it is not spirit alone that fills the ultimate, nor is it the material world, but both. Neither the obverse nor the reverse is to be ignored, neglected, or set aside. It is never wealth that is needed, nor fame, for these are but extras to be added or denied; yet, to all flesh, there is no joy in asceticism, in obscurity, or in renunciation, while nothing is to be gained from poverty but want. Take your way, therefore, to the market place, the office and the shop, and as you pass by the city gates, note this temple, how it stands existent without trace of beginning, mortised without prospect of end; and these ancient building stones, how though often and often rejected, though often and often the cornerstone and the key of the arch, from eternity to eternity they are neither made nor destroyed. What need, then, have we to cry unto the builder from the house of sighs, and as for the dark destroyer, who is he? Look not to the one, therefore, for these stones always were; nor heed the other, for they always are.

Every morning the doors are opened, the bells ring and the elect come tramping in with muddy feet. And after the vibrations have subsided, the master stands and says to them, "I perceive that you are of the earth too earthy. Now then, arise and shake this earth from your feet." This they do, shining their faces upon the astral and the ethereal in

sublimation until, as they are lost in wonder, they are led to believe that there is no shadow cast in all the world because there is nothing solid or in extension within the planes of space. And again after a little the bells ring and the select come trooping out, now walking upon the air. They see neither the stairs nor the doorstep until they fall in full extension upon their faces, when the cold and very solid earth rises and strikes them as hard a smack the second time as the first. Thus is the true existence of the third dimension revealed to them who have considered but one flat of the coin.

We have not come to destroy the evidence but to magnify it, nor are we here by distorting fact to sieve the grosser fine. When we remember our past, that it was long and lowly, should we feel humble or proud inasmuch as we have come at last to stand upright upon our feet? But when man's pride goes into reverse, it is not humility but insolence, and of insolence he gathers shame. Is it not to the greater glory, and eternally to the greater glory, of whatever higher plan or wisdom there may be that we have come to walk the earth through sun and shadow, not by miracle but by law? For if omnipotence at a nod sets the suns ablaze, it is nothing since all the power is there; but if the same be brought about step by step through an ordered process and system that may be traced by the finite mind and grasped by its limited intelligence, there is the glory and there is the wonder. It is when we meditate, however, upon our future that true humility should steal upon us, for that way rise the altitudes and the grandeurs such as we have never known or dreamed.

It is not the watcher that conquers, nor is it the sleeper, but forever they are turn and turn about. Awake, then, for a little into the sun; or for a while, if it may better please you, lose yourself from view under the slowly circling stars. Here, within these bright meadows or within these shady groves, relax from weariness and pain, so also that heaviness and care be set aside and pettiness fall from your shoulders like a garment that is shed. Into the infinite spaces, lifting like a clearing fog, uncertainty will surely flee from us, and into the endless silence, our wordless fear. It may be that nothing more than this will claim us, and again it may be that the hounds, tawny and silken-eared, surprise us as they come bounding through the underbrush to our feet, while afar off, faintly, the hunter winds his horn. Tomorrow, refreshed and strengthened, we go up onto the height or down into the valley. And if never tomorrow, what then?

L. B. W.

GUILD MEETINGS

The program for the November meeting of the Guild, to be held on Friday evening, November 8, at the usual time and place, is to be one of old-fashioned flavor, consisting of the reading of ballads combined with a song fest by a barbershop quartet.

Mr. Matthew Biller, local poet, who has written a goodly number of ballads, will read some of his latest of these. He will be remembered as having appeared previously before the Guild in the reading of his ballads which he always interprets in his usual inimitable manner. Mr. Biller has three published books of verse to his credit, and some of his work has appeared in The American Mercury, Poetry, a Magazine of Verse, and numerous other publications.

The Quartet of the Four Hoarse Men of San Gabriel is to render the song fest. This quartet, consisting of Mr. S. Mitchell, tenor, Mr. G. Smith, lead, Mr. W. Howard, baritone, and Mr. D. Weld, basso, is one of a nationwide organization of quartets known as The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America. This Society, we are told, now numbers over 14,000 members in 240 chapters.

"While the Society is strongest in the Midwest and the East, the western states, especially California, are rapidly taking their places in the Barbershop world. The Society now has chapters internationally (many in the armed forces), an organization and finance that are spander than most professional societies, an excellent magazine for members and a Song Arrangements Committee that reproduces the original harmonies sung by Society quartets. It has been written up in The Saturday Evening Post, its quartets have sung innumerable times over the radio, and it is in close harmony with The American Society of Authors and Composers. It has won the respect and affection of other organizations everywhere by its musical contributions to many worthwhile causes..."

The week of November 3 to 9 is National Art Week. For the occasion, a new exhibition of the paintings of our local artists will be hung in City Hall.

horace

the guild mouse

horace what hev U dun 2 this plaise sed rachel as she kum in with the kids frum thare sumer in2 the kuntrie - Bee4 i Went away in2 the kuntrie i kleaned the hole joyrt," kontinered rachel and it wuz prittie and sweet as i left it for my sojern. i even went out over 2 same royal kut rates drug stoer and picked up sum nise smellin cent 2 give offen the aroma uv a frensh shellay. the delikate perfume of a debycutanties hoodwa she sez the exotick atmosfere inhaled by the prins as he entirs the prinsesses inner sanktum it wuz my midsomer nites droom while i wuz bathing in the sun lite that trikkled throu the palamento trees and kast thare long purpil shados akrost the potio. mi thots wer with U horace she sez as U wer sicting in Ure favorit chair with the smook frum Ure kob pipe karressing my kob web above my chaste lownge -- OOO she skreemed looking up 2 the sealing -- whare is my darling kobweb?

why i sez I just - i no what U did sez rachel as U nocked it down she sez. probablee U wuz out with sum uv the rats around hear and cum in hier than a kite and threw Ure pipe at it she sez or maybe U brot sum frensh --- O no U kud int dew that 2 me while I wuz away out in2 the kuntrie alon for my hay fefer she sez suffering and taking kare of Ure oft springs 2 boot.

now Now rachel darling i sez iffen U will permit me 2 git a word in between gasps kalm Ure self down thekun trie air has no dout reeched the satchurashun point in Ure blud stream as thats what hapins my deer rachel the kleeer kuntrie air penetrates Ure lungs is karried by the arteries 2 the ultimote rekurses of Ure person then distributid two the vaynes piked up by the katapillars witch in tern absorp the sunshine wat flows bak through the chanelis 2 agin am bellish the sistim with the invigeratin kountrie air.

wel sez rachel now that U menshun it it kud bee but it aint. but let me tell U sum thing by the looks of things hear U hav not liftid Ure litel tow 4 2 kleen this hear plaise or tucked in the nest sinse i left she sez.

Know my deer I sez (athinking 2 myself on2 what a ford hoamkuming this wud tern out 2 B) (alowed) I have just relaxed while U wer away sucking in the kountrie air and i smcaked my kob pipe looked out through a whole in the uven and thot uv U and ower litel brud.... O yeah she sez, but whare thares a way thars love. Kum and sit down hear byside me on2 the chaste lownge and tell me moar she sed, about my blud stream.

SUNDAY IN THE HILLS

Robert H. McCullagh

During most of the year Sunday with us in the Hills was a day of quiet rest or the day we visited with our neighbors. In the summer time, however, we looked forward to the services we held at the head of Squaw Creek, on the flat we called the Hand. We were too far from town to attend church there. Our population was so small and scattered we could not afford a minister, so we made the best of what we had.

Our preacher was 'Old Timer,' a rancher like ourselves. Many years before he had worn the cloth. But long ago he had abandoned the pulpit for the more exciting life of the West. Time had brought to him the realization of what he had missed in forsaking his calling and he had come to regard his neighbors as his flock.

Our Sundays were a queer mixture of divine worship with quiet meditation or with talking with our friends and neighbors. Sports for the young, splendid angling for brook trout by the Waltonites, flower picking and the making of mud pies by the children. And, I must confess, horse-trading and other worldly pursuits not entirely in keeping with the day, by the elders.

Our church was one of the oldest on the continent. An outdoor church, in its grandeur it exceeded that of the Church of St. John the Divine, though showing no handiwork of man.

As you turned away from our pulpit and looked down the canyon you saw the rushing mountain stream as it wound about the floor of the valley, first on one side and then, without apparent reason, darting across to hug the wall on the other. Now flowing sedately along, as any well-mannered stream should do, it would suddenly fling itself headlong down a long riffle, trying its best to push the rocks out of the way, all the time chuckling and muttering as though talking to the trout that lay just below the rough water waiting for the food their impetuous friend would surely bring them.

The canyon or valley was lined on both sides nearly its entire length by walls of white limestone. The walls as they rose tilting back from the canyon, as if to admit more sun, continued almost without a break except where a smaller canyon or draw led off to the right or left, each bringing its tiny murmuring trickle as a gift to the mother draw.

In the brilliant sunshine of our high altitude the glare of the limestone walls would have been blinding, had they not been curtained with evergreens. Starting from the edge of the slender meadows on each side of the creek, the mass of pines and spruce, dotted here and there with small clumps of aspen and birch, rose almost to the height of the walls, leaving only the turreted tops of gleaming rock rising above, looking for all the world like the ruins of old castles.

The platform upon which our pulpit sat was a rock which in bygone ages had rolled down from its place in the canyon wall. So large was the rock that an entire surpliced choir could have stood behind the speaker without crowding and from its height one could see for miles down the valley meadows.

Our Sunday started as a day of recreation and of sport for the adolescent youth. As early as possible young riders would appear on the banks of the stream. Each one, after hobbling his horse, would start fishing so as to contribute his share of the noon meal. From their well-filled baskets you would have thought that each one had determined there would be no repetition of the old, old story of the loaves and fishes.

About mid-morning the families would begin to arrive, the men on horseback and the women driving the teams hitched to our mountain buggies. Each buggy would be loaded with children. Packed under the seats would be the baskets of food, cans of milk, frying pans and the usual assortment of tin cups and plates. As each family unloaded its buggy and then unhitched the horses, which were turned out to graze, the Hand assumed the appearance of a stopping place of a party of home-seekers taking a midday rest.

An hour before noon the tarpaulin wagon covers all were dragged out and spread on the flower-spotted grass in front of the pulpit. The small ancient cottage organ was carried over from the old log schoolhouse nearby and was hoisted up on the rock platform. The simple decorations of the platform of our church were in keeping; soft tanned deer and cow hides covered the floor of the rock and hung down in front. The pulpit we had built of rocks and for a flat top we had used a large semi-square stone. In the crevices of the pulpit rocks the young girls had transplanted wild flowers which grew in such profusion in our hills.

Our valleys were carpeted with wild flowers. The small white flowers, short stems, as if from a fairy tale, were scattered all over the valley floor. And the girls had transplanted them to the pulpit rocks. The young girls had transplanted wild flowers which grew in such profusion in our hills.

sturdy sunflower and, in contrast, the dainty harebell; the crowfoot lily and the bright blue daisy; the violet, the larkspur, roses and pinks; bellflowers and calliopsis and other varieties bloomed as the season advanced.

When the time came for church services, Old Timer would mount his horse and ride to the edge of the platform. Standing on his saddle he would draw himself up and take the pulpit. The little schoolteacher, now our organist, would follow him.

'Rock of Ages' was always our opening hymn and I can still hear the slender reedy voices of the children, the middle tones of the women and underneath the deep-toned basses of the men as the music floated down the canyon; softly dying away, the faint echoes were plainly heard as each face of the rim-rocks caught the sound and tossed it alternately from side wall to side wall.

Our dogs whining softly, the horses with up-flung heads and the grazing white-faced cattle starting to drift toward us, as they always did, all seemed to be taking some part in our service. Picket-pin gophers and woodchucks sitting motionless and even the chipmunks on the rocks apparently sensed the mood of the hour, while high overhead, the only spot in the lazy blue sky, an eagle soared, circling about as though from its station a mile above us he was waiting to relay our supplications to the One we all hoped would receive them.

Old Timer, his white stetson tossed on the rocky floor, his whiter hair and beard stirring in the faint wind that drifted down the canyon, nudging and nodding the wild flowers as it passed, would read his text and then in words of almost one syllable talk to us - not preach, just talk. How clear and simple he made the great truths seem. Long since gone to another range where, no doubt, he spends his time looking after the mavericks and the strays, I know the lessons he taught and the comforts he brought us must have been a powerful plea in his favor as he sought entrance to the place far beyond where the eagle rode.

Then would follow a solo by our only Welshman, and what a wonderful voice the man had! A powerful baritone, he sang without an accompaniment, getting his pitch from a small tuning fork he had carried with him all the years since he had left the mines in the old country. Not a word could he read, but a sheet of music was as plain to him as the trail that led to his bachelor home.

A few more hymns and then Old Timer would give the benediction and include in it the asking of a blessing on the meal that was to follow, a meal composed almost entirely of the products of our own efforts.

What a scene the getting of the dinner was! The boys dragged in an old pitch log by means of a lariat rope and a pony. Two or three attacked it with axes to reduce it to fuel. The immense coffeepot hung on a green limb held up at each end by a forked stick. Flat rocks were piled up to form several stoves. There was water fresh from a bubbling spring. Soon the frying pans would be sizzling from the frying of bacon and literally scores upon scores of trout. Of homemade jams and jellies, made from the wild fruit, there seemed no end. Carrot pies masqueraded under the name of pumpkin, and tasted even better. Long cakes, square and round ones, were plentiful and to spare. Then, to the delight of the children, ice-cream for dessert.

Our way of making ice-cream was extremely primitive - we froze it in the snow in the middle of summer. Quite a large cavern in the limestone wall, bordering the creek, was our cold storage plant. From it we obtained our snow. The opening of the cavern faced the northeast and during the winter the snow would be blown in through the opening and in some years would be packed four or five feet deep. It would be a rare and an exceedingly hot summer in our altitude that would cause the snow to melt entirely. It was not unusual for a remnant of the snow to stay through the summer and form the foundation of a new supply that an obliging, blizzard would invariably bring in due season.

Our ice-cream was no synthetic mixture. Nothing but real cream, so thick it could not be poured, and then dozens of fresh eggs with the necessary sugar. Someone always brought a big wash tub for the purpose. This would be filled with snow and carried to the open, and the ice-cream mixture would be placed in shining ten-pound lard pails. Holding each pail by the bail, we would twirl it back and forth in the snow with a small amount of stock salt sprinkled about the pail as it moved. The tub, surrounded by four or five men, each twirling a pail of cream, was usually the center of a ring of children, to whom the dessert was the best part of the meal and who anxiously hoped there would be enough for two helpings for everyone.

Many were the sighs that were heard as the meal ended. Sometimes the sighs denoted more than a sufficiency, and again they might be ones of regret that human capacity is so limited.

The clearing up of the remains of the dinner and the washing of the dishes was accompanied by the usual compliments on the excellence of so-and-so's jam or jelly or what not, while the men, squatting on their heels, talked hoof or of the old days when the Hand had been the scene of many attempts at cattle rustling, and of the days when certain ones on our range were rather careless about the ownership of horses and cattle, and how they had been made to see the error of their ways. One judged from what was said, that more than one man had viewed the valley from even a greater height than our platform, and with nothing under his feet.

As the sun set, Old Timer would again take the pulpit and, with a few words to help us through the coming week, would close the day by starting us on what seemed to us the only hymn we should sing at that time, 'Day Is Dying in the West.' Then the hitching and saddling up, packing in the equipment and lastly the tired little ones, who fell asleep amid the blankets as the wheels chuckled a cradle song on the way home.

The last man to leave would be the Welshman. As we left the Hand, each family taking the draw that led away to its home, he would mount the rock and, long after we were out of sight, we could hear him sing. Sometimes on a lonely trail I think I can hear him yet, as the twilight descends, and with his voice the sleepy murmur of the children, their tiny hands still filled with wilted wild flowers, droning a soft accompaniment to his song, 'Abide With Me.'

AFTERNOON SONG by John Russell McCarthy

The flaming flowers are noisy now with bees;
They gave of beauty, took what beauty brought;
And beauty is their tiny life forever—
Their purpose somewhere underneath a thought....
And underneath a song.... O poet, poet,

Sing surer than the song the flower makes,
Sing greener than green leaves, redder than roses,

Be April over the Earth when April breaks.

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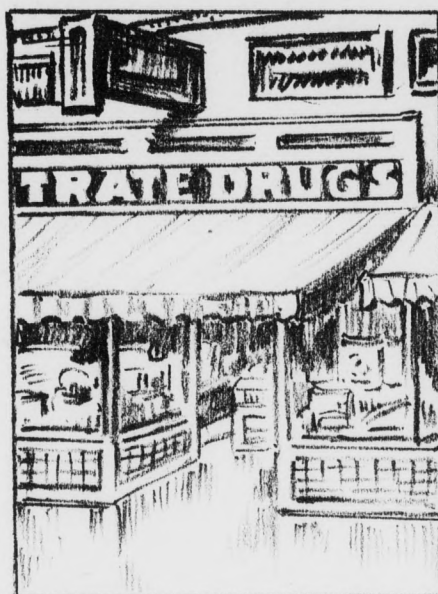
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